2

the second volume

orange

【オレンジ】

高野苺

TAKANO ICHIGO presents
ACTION COMICS
published by FUTABASHA

...WHAT KAKERU WOULD'VE BEEN LIKE AT 26.
...WE TALKED ABOUT...
ALL THROUGH THE DRIVE TO KAKERU'S GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE...
"PARALLEL WORLDS."
THAT KIND OF THING DOESN'T EXIST, OF COURSE.
BUT IF I COULD CHANGE THE PAST...
...I COULD MAKE A 26-YEAR-OLD KAKERU EXIST IN THIS WORLD.
I DESPERATELY WANTED TO BELIEVE IT.
orange

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LETTER 5

MAY 24TH

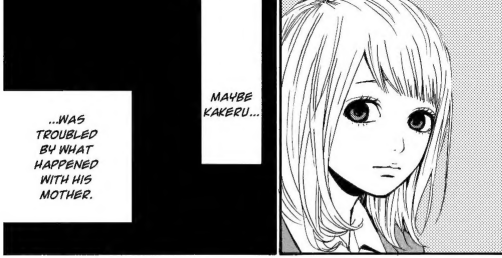
KAKERU IS GOING TO BE ABSENT FOR ONE WEEK, STARTING TODAY.

WHEN I ASK HIM WHAT WAS WRONG, HE DOESN'T ANSWER.

WHEN I THINK ABOUT IT NOW, THIS IS THE 49TH DAY AFTER HIS MOTHER'S DEATH, THE TRADITIONAL DAY FOR A MEMORIAL SERVICE.

I ONLY FOUND OUT THAT SHE DIED ON APRIL 6TH, THE DAY OF OUR OPENING CEREMONY...

...AFTER KAKERU HIMSELF PASSED AWAY.


MAYBE KAKERU...
...WAS TROUBLED BY WHAT HAPPENED WITH HIS MOTHER.

"NO... IT'S MY FAULT FOR ASKING."
"SORRY. I SHOULDN'T TALK ABOUT STRANGE STUFF LIKE THAT."

NAHO! GOOD MORNING!
GULP
SSSSSS
I SHOULD HAVE...
...ASKED HIM MORE ABOUT IT THEN.

JUNE 21ST
IT RAINS REALLY HARD IN THE MORNING (BUT CLEARS UP IN THE AFTERNOON).

KAKERU IS SOAKED BECAUSE HE FORGOT HIS UMBRELLA. SO I LEND HIM A HANDKERCHIEF.

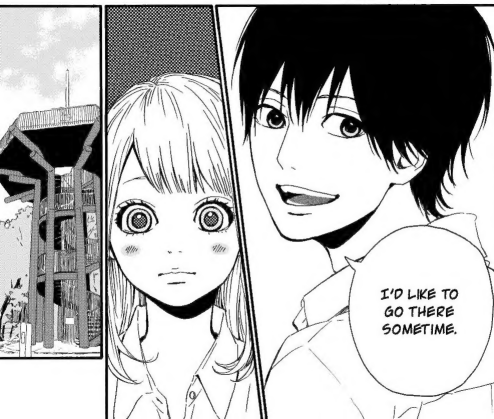
I WISH I'D BROUGHT A BATH TOWEL WITH ME...

WE CAN ALL WALK HOME TOGETHER!
AZU! TAKA-CHAN! KAKERU'S FREE TODAY!
SURE! LET'S!
TESTS ARE ABOUT TO START, SO I DON'T HAVE THE CLUB TODAY.
HUH?

They're doing a story on Miho Morita's son...
I'M GONNA WATCH EVENING GET!
Let's Make a Pro Soccer Club!
I WANNA GET HOME FAST TO PLAY A VIDEO GAME.
SUWA... HAGITA-KUN...

THE SOCCER CLUB IS ON HIATUS BEFORE FINALS.
THE SIX OF US WILL FINALLY WALK HOME TOGETHER AGAIN.
AFTER EVERYONE GOES THEIR SEPARATE WAYS, KAKERU WILL SAY, "LET'S STUDY TOGETHER FOR FINALS ON SATURDAY."

MAYBE...
WHY IS IT JUST THE TWO OF US?
I'm glad it decided to clear up.
HUH?
NAHO...
YOU LIVE NEAR JOYAMA PARK, RIGHT?
カーン
...THE PART ABOUT HIM INVITING ME TO STUDY TOGETHER ON SATURDAY HAS CHANGED, TOO.


I'D LIKE TO GO THERE SOMETIME.

WOW!
WHAT A VIEW!
The mountains are amazing!
THAT CITY OVER THERE IS AZUMINO.
THIS IS ALL MATSUMOTO?!
IT FEELS GREAT UP HERE! NICE AND COOL.
THE VIEW AT ALPS PARK IS BEAUTIFUL, TOO.
Ah! Matsumoto Castle!
They've got a lot of animals there...
HUH... I WANNA GO THERE, TOO!
THUMP
NAHO! CLOSE YOUR EYES!

KEEP 'EM CLOSED UNTIL I SAY "OKAY"!
WHAT FOR?
HURRY UP!
YEAH, CLOSE 'EM!
MY EYES?
HUH?
HURRY UP...
I'M SCARED!
RUSTLE RUSTLE
I CAN'T SEE!
WHAT IS THIS?!
WAIT A SEC...
YEAH. CAN I OPEN THEM NOW?
HE TOUCHED MY HEAD?
SORRY. DID I STARTLE YOU?
EEK!
!!
OKAY!

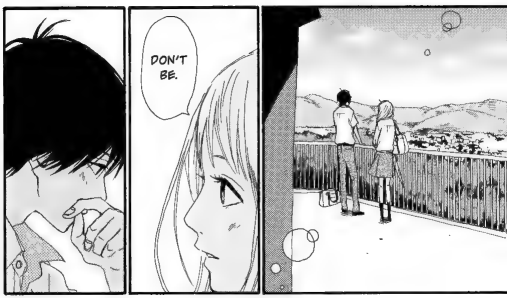
FLASH
U...
YOU TOOK A PICTURE?!
HA HA HA! SORRY!
WHY? YOU JERK!
わーん
WAAAH
MY BAD.
BUT I'M GLAD IT LOOKS GOOD ON YOU.
LOOK.

MY HAIR...
IT LOOKS CUTE...
IT'S MY GIFT...
THANK YOU...
...FOR MAKING ME LUNCH...
...TO YOU, NAHO.
...AND WAKING ME UP IN THE MORNING.

YOU BOUGHT ME A JUICE...
THAT WAS NOTHING!
YOU DID PLENTY FOR ME BEFORE THAT!
...HAVEN'T BEEN MAKING YOU LUNCH OR ANYTHING SINCE YOU STARTED GOING OUT WITH UEDA-SEMPAI.
BUT... I...
I LOVE IT...

THANK YOU...
...KAKERU!
I WAS SO SURPRISED...
...THAT I HAVE TEARS IN MY EYES.
KAKERU IS SO KIND...
WHEW! I FEEL ALL EMBARRASSED FOR SOME REASON.
MY HEART'S POUNDING!
HUH? I THOUGHT YOU WERE USED TO THIS KIND OF THING.
I mean, you are from Tokyo...
IT'S MY FIRST TIME!
I didn't do anything like this in Tokyo!

BUT... SEE...
IF POSSIBLE, I WANTED TO EAT THE LUNCH THAT YOU MADE...
...SO I TURNED HER DOWN.
I'M SORRY...
...FOR BEING SO SELFISH.
...I LIVE ALONE WITH MY GRANDMA.
RIGHT NOW...
TO BE HONEST... THE FIRST DAY YOU MADE LUNCH FOR ME...
...GRANDMA FELT BAD FOR YOU, SO SHE OFFERED TO MAKE ME LUNCH FROM THEN ON.


DON'T BE.

I LOVE YOU.
I'M IN LOVE WITH YOU.
I...
WELL... SHOULD WE GO BACK DOWN?
YEAH...
NAHO...
IT FEELS LIKE I'M FLOATING OFF THE GROUND.
I'M SO HAPPY RIGHT NOW THAT I CAN'T STAND STILL.

THE FUTURE...
ARE YOU FREE ON SATURDAY?
...IS CHANGING LITTLE BY LITTLE.
SO PRETTY...
I WONDER IF KAKERU PICKED IT OUT.
HE HUNG OUT WITH SUWA RECENTLY. Did he get it then?
I HAVE A FEELING IT COST A LOT MORE THAN MY MAKING LUNCH FOR HIM DID.
It's too nice for me to wear!

APPARENTLY, KAKERU BROKE UP WITH UEDA-SEMPAI AFTER A MONTH.
BE CAREFUL. IF YOU GET ALL GIDDY WHEN HE ASKS YOU TO STUDY TOGETHER, YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO GET A GOOD SCORE ON THE TESTS.
AND HE DID INVITE ME TO STUDY ON SATURDAY.
SCRIBBLE SCRIBBLE
SWISH
IT'S ALL THANKS TO THE LETTER.
WHAT HAPPENED TODAY, TOO...
BUT THAT CHANGED TO TWO WEEKS.
THE LETTER SAID THAT HE DATED HER FOR A MONTH.
I WONDER IF THE ME OF THE FUTURE...
...ALSO HAS...
...TAKERU'S PRESENT.
THANK YOU, FUTURE ME...
...FOR SENDING THE LETTER.

SOME-
THING
FEELS
NEW...
WE'RE
WEARING
OUR
CIVVIES!
SORT OF
EMBAR-
RASSING,
ISN'T IT?
IT IS!

HUH? RIO, ISN'T THAT YOUR BOY-FRIEND?
WHAT?
NO, WE BROKE UP
I DID INVITE SUWA, BUT HE TURNED ME DOWN.
I... I SEE.
SO IT'S JUST THE TWO OF US.
NOT COMING. ...
WHERE'S EVERYONE ELSE?
IF EVERYONE ELSE WERE HERE, WE'D END UP SCREWING AROUND
UH...
...
HE'S WITH THAT GIRL AGAIN.
AND IT'LL BE QUIET...
AFTER ALL, IT'S AT THE LIBRARY...
I'LL BE NERVOUS THE WHOLE TIME!
SO THE TWO OF US ARE GOING TO STUDY...
WHAT A BUMPKIN.

...JUST LIKE ALWAYS...
...HE GAVE ME A BIG SMILE.
I THOUGHT MAYBE HE WOULDN'T WANT THEM, BUT WHEN I HANDED THEM OVER...
I SECRETLY TOOK NOTES FOR KAKERU ON THE DAYS HE WAS ABSENT.
(MATH)
(WORLD HISTORY)

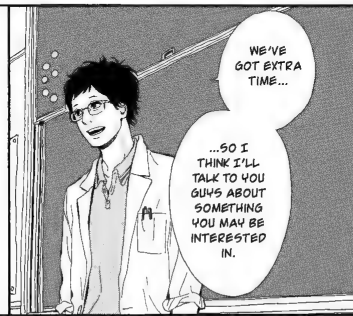
EVEN THOUGH I LOVE HIM SO MUCH...
...A FUTURE KAKERU.
...THERE WON'T BE...
I WANT TO SAVE...
...BOTH TAKERU AND THE FUTURE ME.
I DON'T WANT TO...
...EXPERIENCE THAT FEELING.
I WONDER HOW SAD...
...THE FUTURE ME WAS.

JULY 4TH
WE GET OUR CHEMISTRY TESTS BACK. KAKERU GETS THE HIGHEST SCORE OF ALL SECOND-YEARS. (I GET AN AVERAGE SCORE THIS TIME AROUND...)
IT'S THANKS TO YOU, NAHO!
I DON'T GO TO CRAM SCHOOL.
WHAT CRAM SCHOOL DO YOU GO TO!?
EVEN THOUGH YOU WERE ABSENT ALL THOSE DAYS!
ONLY IN CHEMISTRY.
WOW!
KAKERU! DUDE!! THE HIGHEST SCORE?!
THANK YOU FOR HELPING ME STUDY!
I GOT A DECENT SCORE MYSELF. THAT'S A RELIEF...
92
(NAHO TAKAMIYA)
WHAT ARE YOU TWO SO HAPPY ABOUT? YOU BOTH GOT BELOW AVERAGE SCORES!
GRIN!
ニヤニヤ
53
24

AFTER WE GOT OUR TESTS BACK, THERE WAS EXTRA TIME IN CLASS, SO NAKANO-SENSEI TALKED TO US ABOUT SOMETHING.

IT WAS SO INTERESTING THAT I REMEMBER IT EVEN NOW.

IT WAS ABOUT "TIME TRAVEL."



WHAT IF YOU COULD USE A TIME MACHINE TO GO TO THE FUTURE AND BRING BACK THE ANSWERS?

"IF ONLY I KNEW WHAT WAS GOING TO BE ON THE TEST BEFOREHAND"?

HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT...

I BELIEVE IT'S POSSIBLE...

...TO BUILD A TIME MACHINE.

FIRST, HOW IS IT POSSIBLE TO GO TO THE FUTURE?

BY MOVING NEAR THE SPEED OF LIGHT...

BUT IF THERE HAD BEEN A TIME MACHINE...

...INSTEAD OF A LETTER, THE FUTURE ME WOULD PROBABLY COME HERSELF.

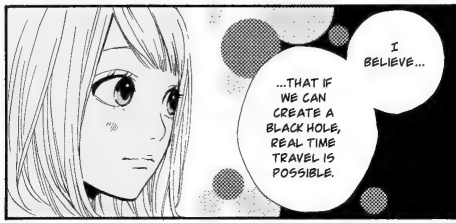
HMMM...

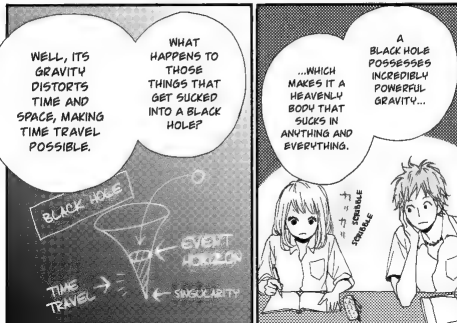
MAYBE THE FUTURE ME SENT IT BACK WITH A TIME MACHINE...

THAT LETTER...

THEN THERE'S ALREADY A PERFECTED TIME MACHINE TEN YEARS FROM NOW?!

WHAT I'VE BEEN TALKING ABOUT...
...IS SIMPLE TIME TRAVEL THAT CAN BE PROVEN THEORETICALLY.
BUT NOW LET ME GO FURTHER, TO IMPRACTICAL TIME TRAVEL, WHICH SOME PEOPLE THINK IS STILL FEASIBLE.
(SPEED OF LIGHT)
$T=\sqrt{1-(v/c)^2}$
YOU SEE...
WE CAN EXTRAPOLATE THIS FROM EINSTEIN'S THEORY OF RELATIVITY...

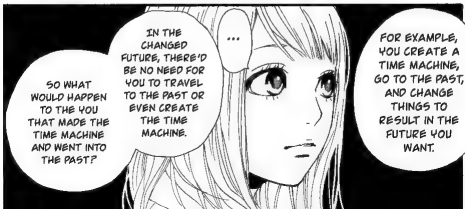

I BELIEVE...
...THAT IF WE CAN CREATE A BLACK HOLE, REAL TIME TRAVEL IS POSSIBLE.


WELL, IT'S GRAVITY DISTORTS TIME AND SPACE, MAKING TIME TRAVEL POSSIBLE.
WHAT HAPPENS TO THOSE THINGS THAT GET SUCKED INTO A BLACK HOLE?
BLACK HOLE
EVENT HORIZON
TIME TRAVEL
SINGULARITY
...WHICH MAKES IT A HEAVENLY BODY THAT SUCKS IN ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING.
A BLACK HOLE POSSESSES INCREDIBLY POWERFUL GRAVITY...
FEASIBLE
FEASIBLE

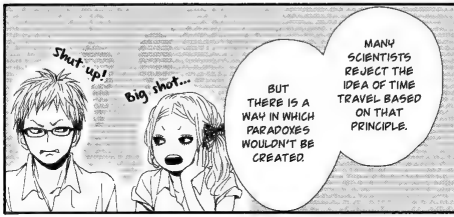
YES, HAGITA-KUN.
SENSEI...
I THINK TIME TRAVEL IS IMPOSSIBLE.

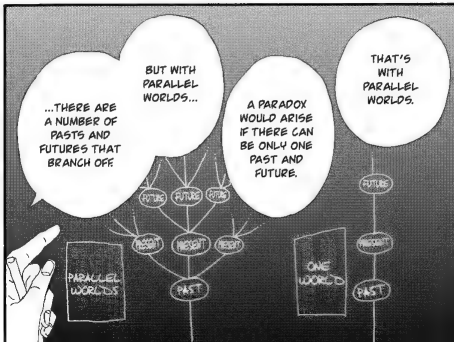
SO IF WE COULD CREATE A BLACK HOLE ON EARTH AND CONTROL IT...
...WE COULD HAVE OURSELVES A TIME MACHINE, RIGHT?
ACTUALLY, EXPERIMENTS HAVE ALREADY BEGUN TO PRODUCE BLACK HOLES.

WOULDN'T TRAVELING TO THE PAST CREATE INCONSISTENCIES?
LET'S ASSUME THAT YOU COULD TIME TRAVEL.


SO WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO THE YOU THAT MADE THE TIME MACHINE AND WENT INTO THE PAST?
IN THE CHANGED FUTURE, THERE'D BE NO NEED FOR YOU TO TRAVEL TO THE PAST OR EVEN CREATE THE TIME MACHINE.
...
FOR EXAMPLE, YOU CREATE A TIME MACHINE, GO TO THE PAST, AND CHANGE THINGS TO RESULT IN THE FUTURE YOU WANT.

YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT TIME PARADOXES.
OKAY.
...I THINK TIME TRAVEL IS IMPOSSIBLE.
AS LONG AS INCONSISTENCIES LIKE THAT EXIST...


Shut up!
Big shot...
BUT THERE IS A WAY IN WHICH PARADOXES WOULDN'T BE CREATED.
MANY SCIENTISTS REJECT THE IDEA OF TIME TRAVEL BASED ON THAT PRINCIPLE.


...THERE ARE A NUMBER OF PASTS AND FUTURES THAT BRANCH OFF
BUT WITH PARALLEL WORLDS...
A PARADOX WOULD ARISE IF THERE CAN BE ONLY ONE PAST AND FUTURE.
THAT'S WITH PARALLEL WORLDS.
FUTURE
FUTURE
FUTURE
PRESENT
PRESENT
PRESENT
PAST
PARALLEL WORLDS
FUTURE
ONE WORLD
PRESENT
PAST

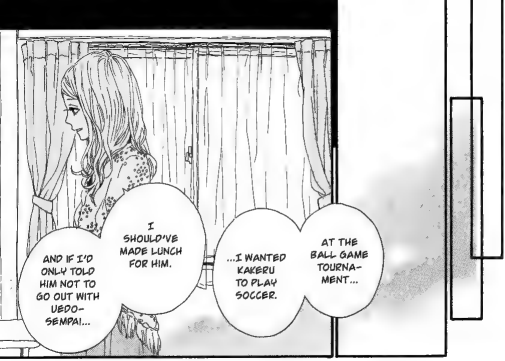
...IT JUST PRODUCES AN AXIS OF TIME DIFFERENT FROM YOUR ORIGINAL WORLD.
WITH A PARALLEL WORLD, IF YOU CHANGE THE PAST...
PRESENT
PRESENT
CHANGE
PAST
IT HAS NO EFFECT ON YOUR OWN WORLD.
SO WITH A PARALLEL WORLD...
...YOU CAN'T CHANGE THE PAST OF YOUR ORIGINAL WORLD.
THEREFORE, PARADOXES AREN'T FORMED.
IF TIME TRAVEL BECOMES POSSIBLE...
...IT MAY LEAD TO PROVING THE EXISTENCE OF PARALLEL WORLDS, TOO.
キーン
DING DONG
カーン
コーン
DING DONG
WELL, THERE'S THE BELL, SO WE'LL STOP HERE.
SEE ME IF YOU HAVE ANY OTHER QUESTIONS.
ALL RISE!
ガタ
RATTLE
ガタ
RATTLE

...YEAH, I DO.
AFTER LISTENING TO NAKANO-SENSEI'S LECTURE...
THERE ARE NOT! THERE'S ONLY ONE PAST AND ONE FUTURE.
...PARALLEL WORLDS?
DO YOU REALLY THINK THERE ARE...
I DON'T LIKE THAT PART...
...YOU COULDN'T CHANGE THE MISTAKES YOU MADE IN YOUR OWN PAST, RIGHT?
...EVEN IF YOU DID BUILD A TIME MACHINE...
BUT IF THERE ARE PARALLEL WORLDS...

COME TO THINK OF IT...
...THE CONTENTS OF THE LETTER ARE MATCHING UP LESS AND LESS WITH MY CURRENT WORLD.
SO IT IS CHANGING THE PAST...
BUT, IF HAGITA-KUN IS RIGHT, AND OUR WORLD ONLY HAS ONE PAST AND ONE FUTURE...
...THEN CHANGING THE PAST BY SENDING THE LETTER HERE...
...SHOULD ALSO CHANGE THE FUTURE, SO WHAT'S IN THE LETTER SHOULD CHANGE.
AND THE LETTER ISN'T CHANGING.

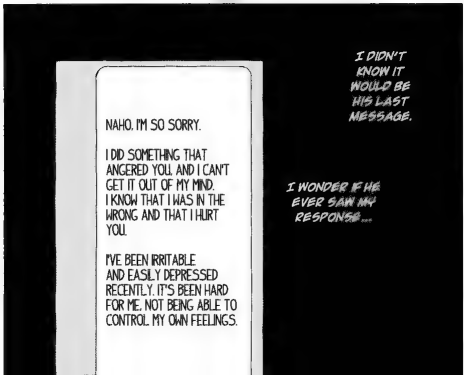
IF THERE ARE PARALLEL WORLDS...
WHICH MEANS...
...ANOTHER PAST EXISTS?
...ONE WORLD IS THE ONE THAT MATCHES UP COMPLETELY WITH THE CONTENTS OF THE LETTER...
...AND THE OTHER IS MY WORLD, WHICH HAS CHANGED BECAUSE OF THAT LETTER.
SO EVEN IF I CAN SAVE KAKERU...
I CAN'T ERASE THE REGRETS OF THE FUTURE ME...
...THE WORLD WITH THE FUTURE ME WHO SENT THE LETTER WON'T CHANGE.

NAHO?
THAT'S SO...
...I'M SORRY.
KAKERU...
...FROM THAT OTHER WORLD...
I'M SO SORRY!


AND IF I'D ONLY TOLD HIM NOT TO GO OUT WITH UEDO-SEMPAI...
I SHOULD'VE MADE LUNCH FOR HIM.
...I WANTED KAKERU TO PLAY SOCCER.
AT THE BALL GAME TOURNA-MENT...

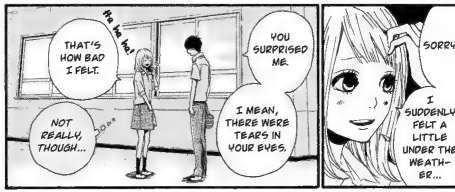
YEAH...
THEN THE FUTURE MIGHT'VE TURNED OUT DIFFERENTLY.
TIME AND AGAIN, I'VE FELT REGRET FOR THOSE THINGS THAT HAPPENED LONG AGO.
I WISH...
...I COULD'VE MADE KAKERU HAPPY.

...KAKERU SENT ME A TEXT.
JUST BEFORE HE DIED...


NAHO. I'M SO SORRY.
I DID SOMETHING THAT ANGERED YOU, AND I CAN'T GET IT OUT OF MY MIND. I KNOW THAT I WAS IN THE WRONG AND THAT I HURT YOU.
I'VE BEEN IRRITABLE AND EASILY DEPRESSED RECENTLY. IT'S BEEN HARD FOR ME, NOT BEING ABLE TO CONTROL MY OWN FEELINGS.
I DIDN'T KNOW IT WOULD BE HIS LAST MESSAGE.
I WONDER IF HE EVER SAW MY RESPONSE...

THANK YOU, NAHO.
THIS IS OUT OF THE BLUE.
BUT WHO DID YOU GIVE VALENTINE'S DAY CHOCOLATE TO?
I GUESS I DON'T REALLY EXPECT AN ANSWER ON THAT...
ANYWAY, I JUST WANTED TO APOLOGIZE. THAT'S ALL.
ガラッ
RATTLE

保健室
(INFRMARY)
ピシャン
...YEAH.
DO YOU FEEL BETTER?
ARE YOU OKAY?


Ha ha ha!
THAT'S HOW BAD I FELT.
NOT REALLY, THOUGH...
YOU SURPRISED ME.
I MEAN, THERE WERE TEARS IN YOUR EYES.
SORRY.
I SUDDENLY FELT A LITTLE UNDER THE WEATHER...

CAN YOU EAT?
I THOUGHT WE'D HAVE LUNCH TOGETHER.
I BROUGHT YOU...
...SOME LUNCH.

...AND IT'D BE A PAIN TO GO BACK TO CLASS, SO JUST THE TWO OF US...
Okay?
AZU TOLD ME TO BRING YOU YOUR LUNCH...
DON'T WORRY?
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
WHERE'S EVERYONE ELSE?
IF YOU LIKE, I CAN KEEP MAKING YOU LUNCH, KAKERU.
THANK YOU!!
YOU DID?!
I was wondering why your lunch was so heavy!
I'D LOVE TO EAT 'EM! YES, PLEASE!
FOUMP
ACTUALLY... I MADE YOU LUNCH, TOO.
EAT IT, IF YOU DON'T MIND...

AFTER CHEMISTRY, WE ALL TALK ABOUT THE UPCOMING FAIR WHILE WALKING FROM CHEM LAB BACK TO OUR HOMEROOM.

I TELL KAKERU ABOUT LAST YEAR'S FAIR. EVERY YEAR, AT THE END OF THE FAIR, THERE ARE FIREWORKS. KAKERU WHISPERS, "LET'S WATCH THEM TOGETHER, JUST THE TWO OF US."

WHAT'S IN THIS POTATO? IT'S DELICIOUS!
YUMM!
They're just mashed potatoes!
THINGS REALLY ARE CHANGING...
...WE'VE JUST GOT THE SCHOOL FESTIVAL BEFORE SUMMER VACATION, HUH?
WITH OUR TESTS OVER AND DONE WITH...

NOW THE SECRET PROMISE...
...ABOUT THE FESTIVAL IS GONE.
NAHO...
IF YOU COULD GO TO EITHER THE PAST OR FUTURE, WHICH WOULD IT BE?
...
THE FUTURE, MAYBE...
...I SEE.
I THINK I'D GO TO THE PAST.
IF THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO TO CHANGE THE PAST...
...THEN I'D WANT TO KNOW THE FUTURE AND CHANGE THE PRESENT.
WHY?
TO ERASE MY REGRETS.

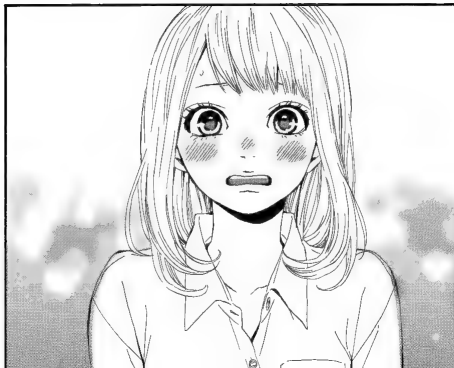
IT'D BE A LOT BETTER THAN CARRYING AROUND REGRETS FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE.
...MAYBE IT WOULD MAKE THE LOAD LIGHTER TO BEAR.
EVEN IF I COULDN'T CHANGE THE PAST...
YOU HAVE REGRETS?
KAKERU...
KAKERU'S WORDS...
...SEEMED POSITIVE, BUT THEY WEREN'T.
IT WAS GREAT.
THANK YOU FOR LUNCH.
CLAP

BY CHANGING THE PAST, YOU MAY HAVE CHANGED SOME GOOD MEMORIES, TOO. (IF SO, I APOLOGIZE.)

BUT THERE ARE PARTS OF THE PAST THAT I DON'T WANT TO CHANGE.

FOR EXAMPLE, MY MEMORY OF THE FIREWORKS AT THE SCHOOL FESTIVAL.

DON'T ERASE THAT MEMORY.



THERE ARE...
TH...
...AT THE END OF...
...THE SCHOOL FESTIVAL
...FIRE-WORKS...
LET'S WATCH THEM TOGETHER!

NO...
THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEAN...
GOOD IDEA!
WE CAN ALL WATCH 'EM TOGETHER!
JUST THE TWO OF US!
HUH?
INVITING SOME-ONE...
I CAN'T BELIEVE I SAID IT MYSELF.

I THINK IT'S THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE.

I WANT TO GIVE KAKERU A FUTURE.
I WANT TO GIVE HIM HOPE.

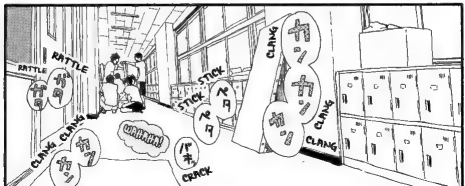
orange
LETTER 6

IN THE WORLD OF THE ME WHO SENT THAT LETTER TEN YEARS FROM NOW
...NOT A THING WILL CHANGE...
EVEN IF I CHANGE THE PRESENT...
...MAY BE TWO DIFFERENT PEOPLE.
...AND THE ME WHO RECEIVED IT IN THE PRESENT...
THE ME WHO SENT THE LETTER TEN YEARS IN THE FUTURE...

WHAT'S UP, KAKERU?
YOU LOOK REALLY HAPPY.
ON THE LAST NIGHT...
...JUST NAHO AND I ARE GONNA WATCH THE FIREWORKS TOGETHER.
THAT OKAY?
I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO THE SCHOOL FESTIVAL.
WHY ASK ME FOR PERMISSION?
WELL, AFTER ALL...

HUH?!
HOW DID YOU KNOW?!
I'VE NEVER TOLD ANYONE!
HEH!
...YOU REALLY LIKE NAHO, DON'T YOU, SUWA?

CONFESS!
NO WAY!
I THINK EVERYONE'S NOTICED...
...EXCEPT FOR NAHO.


RATTLE
RATTLE
STICK
STICK
CLANG
CLANG
CLANG
CLANG
CLANG
CLANG
CRASH!!
CRACK

I DON'T PLAY, THOUGH.
A GUITAR?!
HE HAD A GUITAR AND WAS WITH MARUYAMA FROM CLASS 2.
Cabos
#A #A #A
That's right! It was just karaoke!
...HAGITA PERFORMED AT LAST YEAR'S FEST.
COME TO THINK OF IT...
HUH? HAGITA-KUN?
It's him!
Oh, that's right!
HOW'S THAT?
YOU'RE HANDSOME ENOUGH FOR IT!
I've never been called that before! Say it again!
MAYBE I'LL BE IN IT, TOO...
I KNOW!
KAKERU, WHY DON'T YOU ENTER THE MR. AZALEA CONTEST?
THE WHAT?
BUT, HAGITA...
THAT'S WHAT I'M AIMING FOR.
...YOU'D BE IN LAST PLACE WITHOUT A SINGLE VOTE.
IF YOU DID...
That'd be good, too.

DON'T COMPLIMENT HIM, AZU!
...
YOU'LL MAKE HAGITA SHORT OUT!
#A #A #A
He's looking off into the distance!
ALTHOUGH I LIKE THEM...
...WHEN YOU TAKE OFF YOUR GLASSES, I THINK YOU'RE ACTUALLY GOOD-LOOKING.

WHY ME?
THEN YOU SHOULD ENTER, SUWA.
Unlike #aatta, I'd really get zero votes!
Oh, shut up. You're annoying. Get lost.
Don't tell me you're embarrassed!
SQUEE!!

JUST THE OTHER DAY, THE THREE MANAGERS CONFESSED THEIR LOVE FOR YOU.
YOU'RE POPULAR, SUWA.

IS THAT A GOOD THING?
WOW! I WONDER IF IT'S BECAUSE YOU'RE A GLUTTONOUS, MUSCULAR GIANT?
THAT'S RIGHT. ALL AT THE SAME TIME.
THREE? SOCCER CLUB MANAGERS?
HUH?
SO WHO DID YOU PICK?!

THOUGHT SO...
HUH...
Huh?

I TURNED THEM ALL DOWN.
I LIKE SOMEBODY ELSE.

YOU'RE NOT SURPRISED?
WHAT KIND OF REACTION IS THAT?

I meant to hide it...
WHAT? SERIOUSLY, EVERYBODY KNOWS?
WE KNOW.
I MEAN, COME ON...

...IS TAKAMIYA, RIGHT?
How do you all know!?
THE GIRL SUWA LIKES...

MORON!
SWISH
SMACK

"TAKAMIYA," HE SAID...
ME...?
WH-WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, HAGITA?
Hmm?!
THERE'S NO WAY!! DOOFUS!!
WHAT A DUMMY! FOUR-EYED IDIOT!
I'LL SMASH YOUR GLASSES!
STUPID GLASSES!
ISN'T THAT GOING TOO FAR?
What did my glasses ever do to you!
...

Y-YEAH...
...RIGHT?
THERE'S NO WAY HE LIKES ME.
BUT SUWA...
...DOES LIKE SOMEONE.
I WONDER WHO IT IS...
DING DONG
DING DONG
I'LL TELL YOU ONE THING.

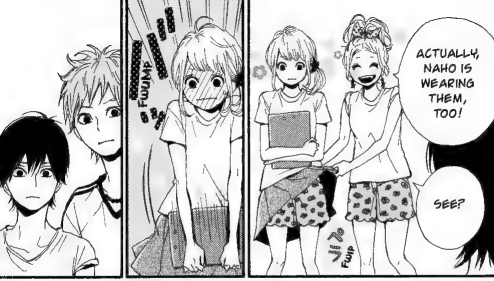
NO WORRIES.
IT'S COOL.
I DIDN'T EXPECT ANY HELP
SO WE CAN'T HELP YOU WITH THIS. SORRY, SUWA.
WE'RE ON NAHO'S SIDE.
...FOR EVERYTHING WE'RE WORTH!
THEN WE'LL ENCOURAGE NAHO AND KAKERU...
NOPE.
IN FACT, I'LL BE HAPPY IF THEY DO.
YOU DON'T MIND IF NAHO AND KAKERU START DATING?

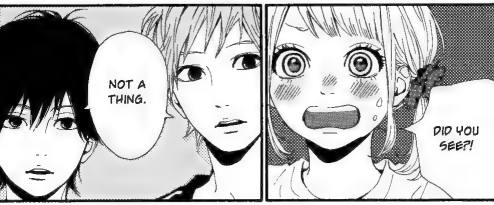
YOU'RE SURE YOU DON'T MIND?
IT'S FINE, I SAID!
IF YOU SAY YOU'LL HELP OUT...
...I'LL TAKE YOU AT YOUR WORD, BUT...
LOOK, I KNOW I DON'T HAVE A SHOT! NOT EVEN A LONG ONE!
BESIDES, I'M ON NAHO AND KAKERU'S SIDES, TOO.

YOU'RE A FOOL.
CHIRP
CHIRP
CHIRP

JULY 13TH

FIRST DAY OF THE "AZALEA" SCHOOL FESTIVAL.
2-6 IS DOING A "POOL HOUSE."


FWUMP
ACTUALLY, NAHO IS WEARING THEM, TOO!
SEE?
Fwip


NOT A THING.
DID YOU SEE?!

COME ON, LET'S GET TO WORK.
Fwa...
Rrrwuu!
We totally saw.
HERE YOU GO.
STRAWBERRY AND CONDENSED MILK!

WHAT ARE THEY, A COUPLE?
THAT SHOWER LOOKS SO COOL...
THOSE GUYS ARE LUCKY.
Cut it out, Kakeru!
Take that!
LET'S TAKE A BREAK.
THE CROWD'S FINALLY DIED DOWN, HUH?
SO HOT...
Whew!
メロン
レモン

SUWA-SEMPAI!

DON'T TELL ME THEY'RE THE RUMORED SOCCER CLUB MANAGERS?
WHO ARE THEY?
Eeeek! It's cold! It's so cold!
They're cute...

WE'RE IN CHARGE OF THE MIST SHOWER.
WANNA TRY?
Mist comes out of here.
YES!!
WHAT ARE YOU GUYS DOING?
Oh, and Narusse-sempai, too!

SUWA-SEMPAI, WOULD YOU ESCORT US AROUND THE SCHOOL?
NOW?
DID HE REALLY REJECT THEM BEFORE?
Popular girl...

NAHO!
!

WH-WHAT?
TAKE MY PLACE HERE.

SORRY.
I'LL BE OUT FOR A WHILE. COULD YOU HOLD THE FORT WITH KAKERU?

YEAH, I'M FINE.
OR ARE YOU OKAY?
NAHO, AREN'T YOU HOT?
Have fun!
NO PROBLEM!
SORRY, GUYS. BUT THANKS!
NICE ONE, SUWA!
You did it!

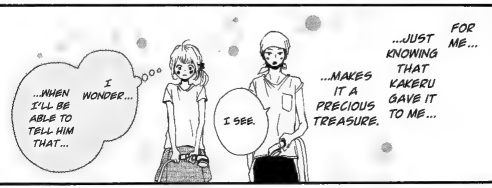
WHEN THE CROWD THINS OUT IN THE AFTERNOON, SUWA ASKS ME TO TAKE HIS POST, LEAVING ME ALONE WITH KAKERU.

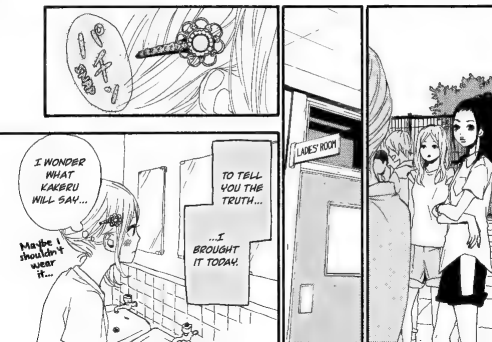
I WANT YOU TO NOTICE ALL THE TIMES SUWA HAS BEEN THOUGHTFUL TO YOU.

SUWA...
...IS TOTALLY COOL WHEN HE'S PLAYING SOCCER.
HE'S REALLY GOOD AT IT.
HE HAS BETTER JUDGMENT THAN THE TEAM CAPTAIN, AND ALL THE PLAYERS RELY ON HIM.
HUH...
I THINK I COULD FALL FOR HIM, TOO.
HA HA HA!
I SORT OF HAVE THE URGE TO CHEER HIM ON...
...ABOUT LANDING THE GIRL HE LIKES.
WELL, SURE.
I HOPE THINGS WORK OUT FOR HIM.

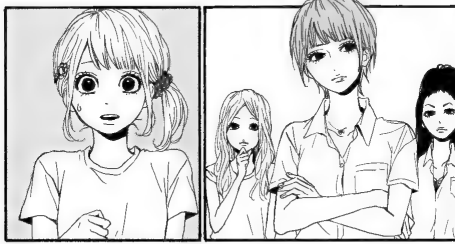
I KNOW...
...THAT SUWA'S ALWAYS LOOKED OUT FOR ME.
YEAH.
BUT SOME-WHERE...
...ALONG THE LINE...
HE'S ALWAYS SO KIND TO EVERY-ONE...
...IN AN OFF-HANDED WAY.
BY THE WAY, NAHO...
ARE YOU USING THAT HAIRPIN?
HUH?
...I STARTED TAKING THAT FOR GRANTED.

...ESPECIALLY SINCE YOU GAVE IT TO ME.
I MEAN, I'D HATE TO WEAR IT AND HAVE IT BREAK...
SOMEHOW, WEARING IT FEELS WASTED ON ME.
...I PROBABLY SHOULD'VE GOTTEN YOU SOMETHING YOU ACTUALLY WANTED
I JUST MEANT THAT IF YOU'RE NOT USING IT...
OH...
You're not using it, are you?
HUH? IT'S NOT LIKE THAT!


...WHEN I'LL BE ABLE TO TELL HIM THAT...
I WONDER...
I SEE.
...MAKES IT A PRECIOUS TREASURE.
...JUST KNOWING THAT KAKERU GAVE IT TO ME...
FOR ME...


I WONDER WHAT KAKERU WILL SAY...
Maybe I shouldn't wear it...
TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH...
...I BROUGHT IT TODAY.
LADIES' ROOM

EXCUSE ME...
I TIRED OF BEING A PERSON WHO CAN'T DO ANYTHING AND THEN REGRETS IT LATER!
BUT THERE'S NO BETTER TIME TO WEAR IT THAN NOW!
I'VE GOTTA BE PRO-ACTIVE!



ARE YOU GOING OUT WITH HIM?
NO.
WE'RE JUST FRIENDS.
DIDN'T I SEE YOU WITH KAKERU AT THE LIBRARY RECENTLY?
WHAT WERE YOU DOING?
JUST... STUDYING...
HMPH.

THEN HOW ABOUT YOU STAY AWAY FROM HIM?
I DON'T WANNA SEE YOU WITH KAKERU AGAIN.
...
WHAT'S...
...THAT HAIRPIN?
LET ME SEE IT A SECOND.
WHY NOT?
WHERE'D YOU BUY IT?
IT'S...
...A PRECIOUS GIFT THAT KAKERU GAVE ME.
NO...

'SCUSE ME.
GO ON AHEAD.
HUH?
SUWA-SEMPAI?
STOP IT!
FWAP
SHE SAID SHE JUST WANTS TO SEE IT.
GIVE IT HERE.
OW...
WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?!

LET'S GO, NAHO.
He's huge...
I'M SORRY...
WHAT ARE YOU APOLOGIZING FOR?

NAHO, IS YOUR HAND OKAY?
DID YOU GET SCRATCHED BACK THERE?
YEAH...
IF I GO BACK TO THE ROOM, I'LL PUT A BAND-AID ON IT.
BUT NEVER MIND ME.
WHAT ABOUT YOU? THE MANAGERS...
IT'S FINE.
I'D RATHER BE HERE.
BACK THEN, SUWA SEEMED TO REALLY CARE ABOUT ME.

HE WAS BASHFUL AND KIND IN A CASUAL WAY.

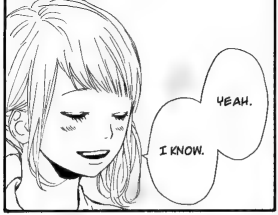
IF YOU NOTICE HIS KINDNESS YOURSELF,
PLEASE TELL HIM "THANK YOU."

I'M SURE HE'LL BE PLEASED.

...UNTIL WE GOT TO THE POOL.
SUWA PULLED ME ALONG...
FOR SOME REASON, THAT REALLY GAVE ME PEACE OF MIND.
I'M SORRY, KAKERU!
HUH? FOR WHAT?
ME
WHO?
SORRY FOR WHATEVER!
FOR WHAT...? UM...
I DON'T KNOW WHAT "WHATEVER" MEANS...

...HURT HER HAND.
NAHO...
...GIVE THESE TO NAHO.
SO PLEASE...
I brought em from the infirmary.
BAND-AIDS?
YOUR HAND.
AH... UM... IT'S NOTHING...
WHAT HAPPENED THERE?
HUH?
!

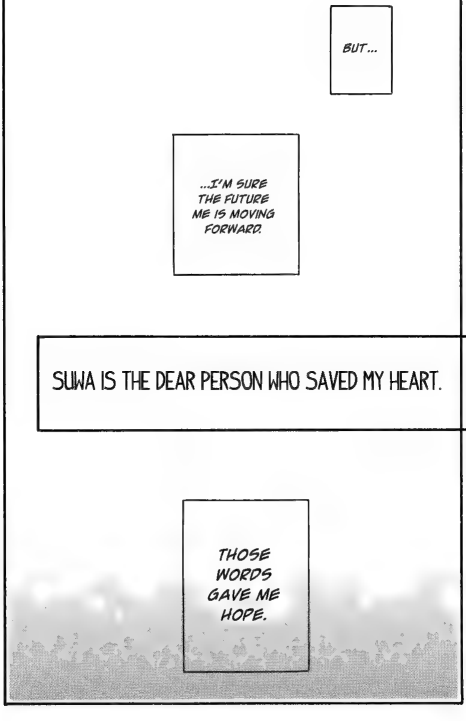
ペタ
STICK
ドキ
THUMP
ドキ
THUMP
ドキ
THUMP
HOW DID KAKERU KNOW?
"NAHO, IS YOUR HAND OKAY?"
"DID YOU GET SCRATCHED BACK THERE?"


YEAH.
I KNOW.

SUWA BROUGHT THEM.
THUMP
Don't tell her!

THANK YOU, SUWA.
THANK YOU...
...FOR EVERYTHING.

TEARS OF JOY...
YOU'RE CRYING?!
!?
DID THE ME OF THE FUTURE...
...SEND THE LETTER...
...EVEN KNOWING THAT THE PAST COULDN'T BE CHANGED?
...FROM SADNESS AND REGRET.
MAYBE NOTHING CAN BE DONE TO SAVE MY FUTURE SELF...


BUT...
...I'M SURE THE FUTURE ME IS MOVING FORWARD.
SUWA IS THE DEAR PERSON WHO SAVED MY HEART.
THOSE WORDS GAVE ME HOPE.

orange
LETTER 7

JULY 15TH

THE LAST DAY OF THE AZALEA FESTIVAL.

TODAY, SUWA AGAIN TRADES POSTS WITH ME SO I CAN BE WITH KAKERU.

WHILE I'M ALONE WITH KAKERU, I GET SO NERVOUS THAT I CAN'T CARRY ON A CONVERSATION.

BETWEEN ME...
...SUWA, AND HAGITA-KUN, IF ONE OF US WAS GONNA DECLARE OUR LOVE FOR YOU...
...WHO WOULD YOU MOST WANT IT TO BE, NAHO?
WH-WHY IS HE SUDDENLY ASKING ME THAT?
UH...
UM...
WHO?
HUH?!

I...
I CAN'T DECIDE.
JUST TELL ME. IT WON'T HURT MY FEELINGS.
HUH?
TH-THAT'S NOT IT...
WHO WOULD I MOST WANT IT TO BE IS EASY...
...BUT THERE'S NO WAY I CAN SAY IT!
I JUST CAN'T!
OKAY, HOW ABOUT YOU, KAKERU?
WHA...?
Cold drink
UH...
OUT OF THE THREE OF US, WHO WOULD YOU CONFESS YOUR LOVE TO?

That's right! But we know...
...YOU WOULDN'T!
WE KNEW...
...I'M NOT SAYING.
HEE HEE HEE
SORRY TO INTERRUPT!
YES, YOU DID.
I WANTED TO HEAR HIS ANSWER...
Maybe Rizu... Or Taka-chan...
YOU SHOULD'VE SAID

"I WANNA CONFESS MY LOVE TO NAHO!"
EVEN IF I'M NOT IN LOVE WITH HER?
...
AREN'T YOU IN LOVE WITH HER?

I'M NOT SURE IF IT'S OKAY TO FALL IN LOVE WITH HER...
WHY NOT?
I DON'T WANT TO HAVE ANY REGRETS.
WHAT REGRETS?
...
WHEN GIVEN CHOICES...
...I DON'T KNOW HOW TO CHOOSE ONE...
...AND NOT MAKE A MISTAKE.

I'VE MADE A LOT OF WRONG CHOICES THAT I REGRETTED AFTERWARDS.
A LOT?
...
LIKE GOING OUT WITH UEDA-SEMPAI!
THAT MADE PROBLEMS FOR NAHO.
I DON'T WANT TO DO ANYTHING THAT COULD LEAD TO REGRETS AGAIN.
I'M SCARED OF HURTING SOMEBODY.
SO IT'S BETTER NOT TO CHOOSE AT ALL.
WHAT, YOU GONNA KEEP YOUR HEAD IN THE SAND?
YOU'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO DO ANYTHING AND NOTHING WILL CHANGE, KAKERU.
NOTHING HAS TO CHANGE.

KAKERU...
YOU OKAY?
...

IN THE LETTER, WHENEVER THERE'S SOMETHING THE FUTURE ME WANTS ME TO CHANGE...
...AND ALWAYS FAILS IT.
...THAT I FAILED TO ACHIEVE.
BUT THERE WERE TWO THINGS...

THIS IS THE ONE DAY I DON'T WANT YOU TO INVITE KAKERU. SERIOUSLY.

TELL HIM HONESTLY HOW YOU FEEL.

WE INVITED KAKERU ON THE DAY OF THE OPENING CEREMONY.

AND KAKERU STARTED DATING UEDA-SEMPAI.

I WONDER WHAT EFFECT THAT WILL HAVE...

...ON KAKERU...

...ON THE FUTURE...

...HAVE EVEN ONE MORE REGRET...

I CAN'T...

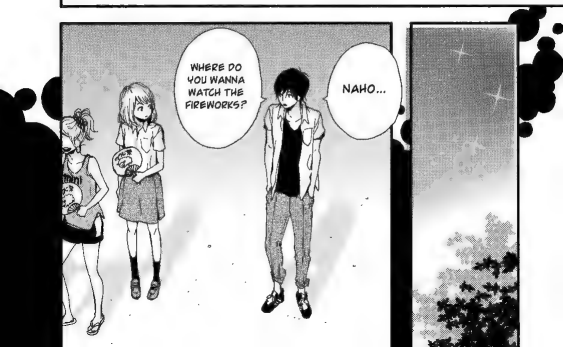
I HAVE TO SUCCEED WITH THAT.

I DON'T WANT KAKERU TO BE SAD ANYMORE.

ON THE LAST NIGHT OF THE FESTIVAL, AT THE END, KAKERU AND I WATCHED THE FIREWORKS BY THE POOL.

BUT NOTHING HAPPENED.

UNUSUALLY, I FEEL COURAGEOUS TODAY.
IF I CAN JUST STAY MY USUAL SELF, IT SHOULD WORK OUT.



AT THE POOL!

You probably sent me the message via telepathy!
Huh? Really?
I WAS THINKING THE SAME THING!

SHE'S LEAVING YOU WITH NO CHOICE, RIGHT?
THAT REALLY TICKS ME OFF
THAT TICKS ME OFF

UWAAH
Cute!
AH!
UEDA-SEMPAI WON THE MS. AZALEA CONTEST!
WHO GIVES A CRAP?
MS. AZALEA
TAKA-CHAN, COOL DOWN! You're making a fist!
I'D LOVE TO SOCK HER ONE!
THEY DON'T KNOW HER TRUE PERSONALITY.
MS. AZALEA
SORRY, I'VE
But it's still fun, right!
AND I'M SORRY!
IN LAST PLACE FOR THE BOYS IS HAGITA-KUN FROM 2ND YEAR, CLASS 6!
DAMMIT.
HA HA HA
THERE'S HAGITA!
BUT YOU DID GET ONE VOTE.
Somebody voted...?
HUH?

EVERYTHING'S SO BLURRY, YOU LOOK LIKE AN ANGEL!
GIMME MY GLASSES!
I COULDN'T HELP IT! LOOK! YOU'RE A HOTTIE!
SQUEE
THEN YOUR VISION IS FINE!
THEY SHOULD JUST START DATING ALREADY...
UGH, REALLY!

WHO DID IT?! WHO GAVE ME THE ONE VOTE?!
IT MUST'VE BEEN ONE OF YOU!
ME!
Me! It was me!
I WANTED A PERFECT ZERO!
Wench!

SHALL WE HEAD TO THE POOL?
Y-YEAH! GOOD IDEA!

THE FIREWORKS WILL BE STARTING SOON...
AM I NERVOUS? OR IS THIS EXCITEMENT? I'M ALL JITTERY.

WOULD YOU GO ON AHEAD, NAHO?
?
SURE.

GO ON AHEAD...?
HE IS ACTUALLY GOING TO COME, RIGHT?
SUWA...
YOU SURE IT'S ALL RIGHT IF I GO?
"NOT GOING" ISN'T AN OPTION.
I'M...
...NOT MAKING A MISTAKE, GOING DOWN THIS ROUTE?
...

FOR ONE THING, THIS "FALL IN LOVE WITH HER" / "DON'T FALL IN LOVE" THING...
...ISN'T SOMETHING YOU CAN CHOOSE.
FOR ANOTHER, I'M NOT IN LOVE WITH NAHO.
BUT IF YOU FALL IN LOVE WITH HER, SHE'LL BE THRILLED.
And if you confess your feelings to her, look out!
WHAT? WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?

(AZALEA FEST)

WHAT, INDEED?
NO, TELL ME.
SHE'D BE HAPPY? SHE REALLY WOULD BE HAPPY?
that bad!
It wouldn't be a burden on her?
JUST GO, DUDE.
"GO," YOU SAY...

GO THE WAY THAT'LL MAKE NAHO HAPPY.
I WANT TO.
THEN STOP HEMMING AND HAWING AND GET YOUR BUTT OVER THERE.
YOU'RE NOT MAKIN' A MISTAKE.
...
YEAH...
THANK YOU.
PLEASE.

LET ME...
...SPEND TONIGHT JUST LIKE MY FUTURE SELF DID.
LET ME...
...SEE KAKERU SMILE.
AH! SECOND-YEAR!
PERFECT TIMING.
I'VE GOT A FAVOR TO ASK.
...
UEDA-SEMPAI...

I WANT YOU TO CARRY THESE BOXES.
OUR TEACHER ASKED US TO DO IT...
...BUT WE DON'T HAVE TIME...
...SO INSTEAD, I WANT YOU TO TAKE THEM UP TO THE SENIOR CLASS 2 ROOM.
I CAN'T RIGHT NOW. I DON'T HAVE TIME EITHER...
HUH?
YOU BETTER GET MOVING, GIRL, 'CAUSE THE TEACHER NEEDS IT DONE.
BUT...
IF YOU CAN'T DO IT...
...THEN SHOW ME THAT HAIRPIN FROM THE OTHER DAY.
IF YOU DON'T WANT TO DO THAT, THEN LUG THESE BOXES.

OKAY...
...

IT'S OKAY.
I CAN MAKE IT IF I HURRY.
AFTER ALL, THE LETTER SAID, "IF I STAY MY USUAL SELF, IT'LL WORK OUT."
BUT, ON THE THIRD FLOOR...
THIS IS KIND OF TOUGH.
HUFF
THAT WENT PERFECTLY!
SHE WON'T BE IN TIME FOR THE FIRE-WORKS.
WELL, I GUESS YOU'LL BE HEADING TO THE POOL, RIO.
HAVE FUN!
THANKS!

THE POOL'S OFF LIMITS.
KAKERU'S NOT THERE, ANYWAY.
HUH?
I... I WASN'T...
KNOWING KAKERU, HE PROBABLY WENT TO THE SOCCER CLUB ROOM.
HE WAS LOOKING FOR YOU.
WHAT? FOR ME?
IS THAT RIGHT? THANKS.

TA TA
GOOD ONE, HAGITA.
IT'S THANKS TO MY BRAIN.
ALL YOU DID WAS LIE. LET'S NOT PUT ON AIRS.
And why'd you take the glasses off?
FUEEEE...
BOOOM
IT'S STARTING.

WHY...?
DID THE SAME THING HAPPEN TO MY FUTURE SELF?
NO. I BET IT DIDN'T.
BOOM
THE FUTURE CHANGED.
WHAT SHOULD I DO?
IT'S SUCH AN IMPORTANT DAY...
TODAY WAS THE ONE DAY THAT I ABSOLUTELY COULDN'T CHANGE...
BUT... I WON'T MAKE IT IN TIME.

STILL...
...IF I GIVE UP HERE...
...I'LL HAVE EVEN MORE REGRETS LATER.
ナオ
NAHO!
mini
WHAT THE HECK ARE YOU DOING?!

WHAT ABOUT YOUR PLAN WITH KAKERU?
HUH? HOW DO YOU...
WERE YOU GIVEN BUSYWORK AGAIN?
YEAH... AND I COULDN'T REFUSE...
GIVE ME THOSE.
WHERE ARE THEY SUPPOSED TO GO?
YEAH! WE'LL DO IT FOR YOU!
REALLY?
WE WERE JUST LOOKING FOR THE BEST VIEW OF THE FIREWORKS, ANYWAY.
THANKS... TAKA-CHAN... AZU...
HA HA HA! QUIT BAWLING!
TURN OFF THE WATER-WORKS AND GET GOING!

THESE ARE PRIZES FOR THE MS. AZALEA CONTEST.
WAIT A SECOND.
YOU'RE RIGHT!
JUICE FOR THE WHOLE CLASS...

THANK YOU, TAKA-CHAN AND AZU!
HA HA HA! FORGET ABOUT IT, KID!
GO AND DON'T LOOK BACK!

There!
TAKA-CHAN...
I'M SERIOUSLY GONNA DECK THAT GIRL!

JUST... RUNNING AN ERRAND!
NAHO, WHERE WERE YOU?
HUH?
TA
TA
TA
TA
TA

THE FIREWORKS ARE JUST ABOUT OVER!
YOU WEREN'T WITH KAKERU?
KAKERU!
#UFF
#UFF
SORRY...

I'M SORRY...
...I'M LATE.
THE HAIRPIN...
AH... I REALLY...
...WANTED TO WEAR IT FOR TONIGHT...
THANK YOU.

I'VE BEEN LOOKING FORWARD TO TONIGHT SO MUCH...
SO MUCH THAT I HARDLY GOT ANY SLEEP LAST NIGHT.
OH, I WOULDN'T... I WAS DETERMINED TO COME.
I THOUGHT MAYBE YOU WEREN'T COMING.
NAHO...
...WONDER WHAT HIS EXPRESSION WOULD BE.
I DID...

THE SOUND OF A TREE BLOWING IN THE WIND...
AN INSECT'S VOICE...
SAME HERE.

TONIGHT, I'M ABLE TO SAY WHAT I THINK NATURALLY.

IS IT BECAUSE I CAN BARELY SEE KAKERU'S FACE?

IS IT BECAUSE IT'S DARK?

THE SOUND OF FIREWORKS ECHOING IN THE SKY...

UNUSUALLY, I FEEL COURAGEOUS TODAY.

IF I CAN JUST STAY MY USUAL SELF, IT SHOULD WORK OUT.

I'M SO HAPPY YOU CAME TO MATSUMOTO.
I'M SO HAPPY I MET YOU.
FOR ME...

...AMONG YOU THREE GIRLS...
...I'D WANT TO CONFESS MY LOVE TO YOU, NAHO.

I'M HAPPY.
I'M GLAD YOU SAID THAT.
ME, TOO...
I'M GLAD.
AH...
THE FIRE-WORKS ARE OVER.
OH, YEAH.

SHOW ME.
...
YOUR HAND...
FROM THE OTHER DAY... IS IT OKAY?
SUWA TOLD ME ABOUT IT.
IT'S MY FAULT. I'M SORRY...
KAKERU, IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT!
besides, it's already healed!
WELL, I WAS NERVOUS.
YOU LOOKED NORMAL, KAKERU.
HUH? BECAUSE OF THAT?
WAS I ACTING STRANGE THEN?
I WAS TOTALLY NERVOUS WHEN I PUT THE BAND-AID ON...

WHEN I HELD UEDA-SEMPAI'S HAND...
...I DIDN'T THINK ANYTHING OF IT.
IT'S STRANGE.
WELL, I BET...
...COMPARED TO MY NERVOUSNESS...
FUEEEEE

THE FIRE-WORKS!
THEY WEREN'T FINISHED!
BOOM
BOOM
BOOM
BOOM
BOOM
BEAUTIFUL!
YEAH.
NAHO...

THANK YOU...
...FOR COMING TONIGHT.
I'M GLAD WE GOT TO WATCH THE FIREWORKS TOGETHER.
I'LL REMEMBER THIS NIGHT FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE.

TODAY WAS A HAPPY DAY.

I'LL REMEMBER KAKERU'S WORDS...

... FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE.

I WONDER IF THE FUTURE ME...
...HELD KAKERU'S HAND.
AH!
WELCOME BACK, KAKERU AND NAHO!
HOW WAS IT?! DID YOU HAVE FUN?!
YEP! THANK YOU!
Good!
Squee!
JUICE IS ON THE HOUSE FOR EVERYONE!
THE PRIZES YOU GET FOR BECOMING THE MS.!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH IT?
MS. WHAT?
mini
mini
THAT FOUR-EYED SCUMBAG!
He's not here!!
WELL, BOTTOMS UP!
CHEERS!

KAKERU USES THE WORD "HAPPY" THIS DAY.

FROM HERE ON IN, PLEASE MAKE KAKERU HAPPY AS OFTEN AS YOU CAN.

I'M SURE THAT'S WHAT WILL SAVE HIM.

orange

LETTER 8

WOWWW! HE'S SO CUTE!
KAKERU IS TINY!
HE'S IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL THERE.
BUT I DON'T THINK HE'S CHANGED MUCH.
HA HA HA! YOU'RE RIGHT!

WAS IT...
CUTE...
...REALLY AN ACCIDENT?
...THE POLICE SAID THEY WEREN'T 100% SURE IT WAS TRULY AN ACCIDENT.
RIGHT AFTER THE TRAFFIC ACCIDENT TEN YEARS AGO...
WE WANT TO KNOW THE TRUTH.

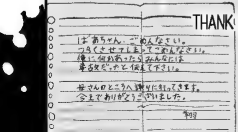
THEY ASKED ME ABOUT HIM.
"HAD HE BEEN ACTING DIFFERENTLY LATELY?"
"DID HE TALK ABOUT DYING?"
BUT AFTER THAT, I HEARD THE COPS RULED IT WAS AN ACCIDENT AFTER ALL.
KAKERU WAS RIDING A BIKE WHEN IT HAPPENED.
THE BRAKES FAILED, HE SPED OUT INTO THE STREET, AND WAS HIT.
BUT WHY ALL OF A SUDDEN? WE ALL THOUGHT IT WAS STRANGE.
...
CAN I TELL THEM NOW...
...KAKERU?

GRANDMA, I'M SORRY.
I'M SORRY I'VE MADE IT SO HARD ON YOU.

IF ANYTHING HAPPENS TO ME, PLEASE TELL EVERYONE IT WAS AN ACCIDENT.

I'M GOING TO SEE MOM TO APOLOGIZE TO HER.

THANK YOU FOR EVERYTHING.



IT LOOKS LIKE...
...KAKERU PURPOSELY RODE INTO THE PATH OF THE TRUCK.
WHAT A WASTE. I WONDERED WHY HE WOULD DO SOMETHING LIKE THAT...
...AND I WISH I COULD'VE DONE SOMETHING FOR HIM SO IT WOULDN'T HAVE HAPPENED...
...BUT REGRET AS I MAY, IT'S TOO LATE TO CHANGE ANYTHING.
KAKERU...

WE WANTED TO SAVE HIM...
I'M SORRY...
I'M SO SORRY.

OH, THAT'S RIGHT.
THIS WAS IN THE TIME CAPSULE THAT WE OPENED THE OTHER DAY.
A PHOTO OF KAKERU. KEEP IT.
YOU'VE MADE MY DAY.
OH, DEAR...

BUT IT'S SAD WITHOUT KAKERU.
...EVEN THOUGH WE PROMISED EACH OTHER TO SMILE TODAY.
WE CRIED A LOT...
I'M LONELY WITHOUT HIM.
"REGRETS"...
THEY ARE THE WEAKNESS AND PITIFULNESS OF ONE'S PAST SELF.
NOT DOING WHAT YOU COULD HAVE DONE...
THAT, IN A NUTSHELL, IS "REGRET."

...BECAUSE YOU CAN KEEP EVERYTHING I REGRET FROM HAPPENING.
EVERYTHING'S GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT...
MYSELF FROM TEN YEARS AGO...
CHIRP
CHIRP
CHIRP
...WAS THANKS TO THIS HAIR CLIP.
MAYBE HOLDING HANDS ON THE LAST NIGHT OF THE FESTIVAL...

BUT ONE THING'S FOR SURE...
KAKERU SMILED.
...SO EVEN IF WE SPEND THE SAME TIME TOGETHER, MAYBE THERE ARE SMALL DIFFERENCES.
I'M SURE MY FUTURE SELF DIDN'T GET A HAIR CLIP...
JINGLE JINGLE
チャラララン
Me?!
ASK KAKERU IF HE CAN COME, TOO.
I'll leave it to you!
AZU
8/1 13:22
YOO-HOO!
WERE MEETING AT 5:30 FOR MATSU-PON THE PLACE IS FLOWER CLOCK PARK
YAY!
KAKERU
8/1 14:31
RE:
I WANT TO GO.
NAHO, ARE YOU WEARING A YUKATA THAT DAY?
THUMP
THUMP
JINGLE JINGLE
チャラララン
SORRY TO BOTHER YOU DURING SUMMER VACATION.
THERE'S A FESTIVAL ON AUGUST 4TH CALLED "MATSUMOTO PONPON." CAN YOU GO?
AZU AND TAKA-CHAN ARE GOING, TOO.
CLICK
CLICK
CLICK

HEE HEE
KAKERU
8/1 14:53
RE:
I WOULD IF I HAD ONE, BUT I DON'T THINK I DO.
YEAH. AZU AND TAKA-CHAN SAID THEY WILL. SO I'LL WEAR ONE, TOO.
WILL YOU WEAR ONE, KAKERU?
CLICK
CLICK

AUGUST 4TH
OUR USUAL GANG OF SIX GOES TO MATSUMOTO PONPON.

EVEN THOUGH KAKERU SAYS HE DOESN'T THINK HE HAS A YUKATA, HE'S WEARING ONE THAT DAY.

ON THE WAY TO THE FESTIVAL, IT'S SO CROWDED THAT OUR GROUP GETS SPLIT UP, AND I FIND MYSELF ALONE WITH KAKERU.

WHILE THE TWO OF US TALK, I ASK KAKERU ABOUT HIS MOTHER, NOT KNOWING WHAT HAD HAPPENED.

KAKERU MEETS THIS LINE OF INQUIRY WITH SILENCE.

I CHANGE THE SUBJECT.

I WANT YOU TO ASK HIM ABOUT HIS MOTHER.

I THINK KAKERU'S REGRET IS NOT BEING ABLE TO HELP HER.

PLEASE SAVE HIM FROM THIS REGRET.

IF YOU CAN DO THAT,
YOU MAY BE ABLE TO STOP THE ACCIDENT FROM HAPPENING.

...

I WONDER WHAT THAT MEANS.

SHOULDN'T IT BE POSSIBLE...

...TO PREVENT THE ACCIDENT JUST BY KNOWING WHEN IT ORIGINALLY HAPPENED?

MAYBE I'LL LOOK AHEAD...
...TO THE DAY OF THE ACCIDENT...
I'VE ALWAYS JUST BEEN READING DAY BY DAY TO KEEP MYSELF FROM GETTING UPSET...
...BUT I SHOULD PROBABLY KNOW WHICH DAY THE ACCIDENT OCCURS.
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
February 15th
THIS IS IT.
THIS IS THE LAST PAGE OF THE LETTER.

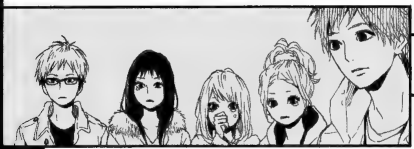
FEBRUARY 15TH
UNTIL THEN, IT'S JUST ANOTHER DAY.

AT NIGHT, I'M IN MY ROOM WRITING IN MY DIARY AS USUAL, WHEN SUWA CALLS, TELLING ME THAT KAKERU'S BEEN IN AN ACCIDENT.

HE TELLS ME THAT KAKERU DIED.

THE ACCIDENT HAPPENS THAT NIGHT AFTER 8:00 PM, AT AN INTERSECTION NEAR KAKERU'S HOUSE.

APPARENTLY, KAKERU IS RIDING HIS BICYCLE WHEN HE DARTS OUT IN FRONT OF A SPEEDING TRUCK.



THERE WAS NOTHING WE COULD DO.
SAVING KAKERU FROM THE ACCIDENT WON'T SAVE *HIM*.

I WANT YOU TO KEEP KAKERU FROM CHOOSING DEATH.

I WANT YOU TO LIGHTEN HIS BURDEN.

I WANT YOU TO HELP TAKE ON HIS TROUBLES.

PLEASE DON'T LEAVE HIM ALONE.

I WANT YOU TO SAVE KAKERU'S HEART.

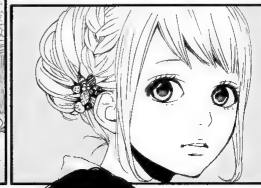
TEN YEARS LATER, WE LEARN THAT IT ISN'T AN ACCIDENT, BUT THAT KAKERU COMMITTED SUICIDE.

WE HAVE BUT ONE REGRET: THAT WE LET KAKERU DIE.

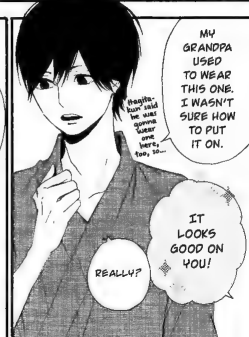
KAKERU'S DEATH...
...IS SUICIDE?
THAT MEANS EVEN IF I PREVENT THE ACCIDENT...
...IT WON'T...
...SAVE HIM.
WHAT CAN I DO TO SAVE KAKERU?
THEN WHAT SHOULD I DO?
NAHO! ARE YOU READY?
no! You're not ready yet!

AH! A YUKATA!
YEAH. I DID HAVE ONE.
Ha ha!

NAHO?



NAHO, YOU'VE CHANGED YOUR HAIRSTYLE, TOO.
I wasn't sure it was you at first.
YEP! I COPIED IT FROM A MAGAZINE.
BY YOURSELF?!


MY GRANDPA USED TO WEAR THIS ONE. I WASN'T SURE HOW TO PUT IT ON.
Hagita-kun told me she was gonna wear one here, too, so...
IT LOOKS GOOD ON YOU!
REALLY?

I WAS WONDERING IF, AS A FRIEND...
...IT WOULD BE STRANGE TO SAY SOMETHING.
WH... WHAT? Ha ha ha!
UM...
Ha ha ha... Strange...
YEAH, I WAS AFRAID OF THAT!
NO, THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT.
UM... STRANGE...?
I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO TRY A STYLE LIKE THIS.
I'm embarrassed!
Waaahh!
NAHO, YOUR FACE IS BRIGHT RED. Ha ha ha!
TH-THAT IS STRANGE!
IT'S CUTE.

I SEE... SO WHAT SHOULD WE DO?
LET'S GO CHECK IT OUT.
AZU AND TAKA-CHAN SAY THEY'RE GONNA BE LATE.
HUH?
I JUST HEARD THAT SUNA AND HAGITA-KUN ARE GONNA BE LATE, TOO.
Y-YEAH. OF COURSE.
MAN, ALL THESE PEOPLE...
IT'S NOT AS CROWDED ON NAWATE STREET.
JUST MAKE SURE THEY DON'T SEE YOU.
IT WORKED!
Your voices are booming.
SHSH
SQUEE!
It's a date! It's a date!
SQUEE!
...IT'S JUST THE TWO OF US, BUT ALSO NERVOUS.
I'M HAPPY...

HOW MANY STRAWS DO YOU WANT? YOU NEED ANOTHER ONE FOR YOUR BOYFRIEND, RIGHT?
THAT'S 250 YEN.
HERE YOU ARE.
JINGLE
YEAH. I JUST GOT A LITTLE SQUISHED
YOU MAKE IT OUT OKAY, NAHO?
HA HA.
OH... WE'RE NOT DATING.
BOY-FRIEND?!
HA HA HA! I SEE. I FIGURED YOU FOR A COUPLE.
Old man that I am! Ha ha ha!
YOU'RE ASKING ME THAT NOW?
BY THE WAY... WHO ARE YOU INTERESTED IN, KAKERU?
W-WE PROBABLY DO.
SINCE IT'S JUST THE TWO OF US, WE LOOK LIKE A COUPLE.

RIGHT NOW...
...I'M NOT "INTERESTED IN" HER.
?
I'VE ALREADY GONE PAST THAT.
RIGHT NOW, I'M "IN LOVE WITH" HER.

I SEE...
HE'S IN LOVE.
SO HE HAS A GIRL-FRIEND.
I'M A LITTLE SHOCKED.
NO, NOT A LITTLE...
REALLY SHOCKED...
WANT TO GO TO THE SHRINE?
YEAH, SURE.

WHAT DID YOU WISH FOR?
FOR YOU...
...TO BE HAPPY.
...ME?
I FORGET... IS IT OKAY TO TELL PEOPLE WHAT YOU WISH FOR?
HUH? IT'S NOT?
That's terrible! Did you do it on purpose?
YEAH.

MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE I KNOW HOW KAKERU REALLY DIES...

...BUT TONIGHT...

...EVEN HIS SMILE LOOKS SAD TO ME.

YOU DIDN'T?
NOT REALLY A WISH.
I CALLED OUT TO MY MOM.
WE'RE TALKING ABOUT GOD...
...SO I FIGURED THE MESSAGE WOULD REACH HER.
WHAT DID YOU SAY TO HER?
THAT'S A SECRET.

I WANT YOU TO ASK HIM ABOUT HIS MOTHER.
I'LL LET IT GO FOR NOW.
I'M KINDA HUNGRY.
LET'S GO FOR YAKISOBA.
OKAY...
WHEN KAKERU'S HAVING A GOOD TIME, I'LL LET HIM ENJOY IT...
AZU AND THE REST ARE REALLY COMING HERE?
YEAH.
BUT WHY DID THEY CHOOSE AGATA FOREST?
It's far away...
AND THERE'S HARDLY ANYONE HERE.
Plus it's dark...
...AND ASK MORE LATER.

MAYBE NOW IS AN OKAY TIME...
CAN I ASK WHAT YOU TOLD YOUR MOM BACK AT THE SHRINE?
KAKERU...
* GETA ARE SANDALS WORN WITH YUKATA
I NEED TO ASK UNTIL HE GIVES ME A REAL ANSWER.
I TOLD YOU... IT'S A SECRET.
IT'S HARDER WHEN YOU WEAR GETA.*
MY FEET ARE TIRED.
THERE'S NOTHING.
LIKE A MEMORY OR SOMETHING THAT'S TROUBLING YOU?
IS THERE SOMETHING YOU CAN TELL ME ABOUT YOUR MOTHER?
EVEN IF IT BOTHERS HIM RIGHT NOW...

TO CHANGE THE FUTURE...
REALLY... NOTHING.
...
DO YOU REGRET...
...I'LL HAVE TO CHANGE THE WAY I'VE BEEN UP TO NOW.
...NOT BEING ABLE TO SAVE YOUR MOTHER?

I THOUGHT...
...YOU WOULDN'T LIKE ME IF I TOLD YOU ABOUT IT.
THAT'S SILLY. I PROMISE.
OKAY.
THANK YOU...
I HAVE MANY REGRETS. BUT I THINK THE BIGGEST ONE...
...IS WHAT HAPPENED ON THE DAY OF THE OPENING CEREMONY.

COME HOME RIGHT AFTER SCHOOL TODAY.
KAKERU...
I HAD A PLAN WITH MY MOM THAT DAY.
YEAH.
THE DAY YOUR MOTHER PASSED AWAY?
MOM HADN'T BEEN FEELING WELL SINCE BEFORE THE MOVE, SO SHE'D COMMUTE TO THE HOSPITAL FROM HERE.
GOT IT.
THE HOSPITAL?
RIGHT.
I MEANT TO GET HOME EARLY THAT DAY.
...SO I PROMISED THAT I'D GO WITH HER.
BUT THAT DAY, SHE WAS GOING TO A NEW HOSPITAL FOR THE FIRST TIME...

BUT...
BECAUSE WE INVITED HIM THAT DAY...
...I WAS SO GLAD THAT YOU GUYS ASKED ME TO WALK HOME WITH YOU...
...EVEN THOUGH THE LETTER CLEARLY SAID NOT TO...
I WAS WORRIED THAT I WOULDN'T MAKE FRIENDS AT MY NEW SCHOOL.
SO I REALLY WANTED TO WALK HOME WITH ALL OF YOU.
I THOUGHT I COULD JUST APOLOGIZE TO MOM LATER.

BUT I NEVER GOT A REPLY.
I SENT HER A TEXT.
"I CAN'T GO WITH YOU TODAY."
MOM HAD BECOME PSYCHO-LOGICALLY UNSTABLE.
SHE COULDN'T DO ANYTHING WITHOUT ME AROUND.
I KNEW HOW MUCH SHE NEEDED MY SUPPORT.
I KNEW, AND YET...

...I THOUGHT SHE WAS BEING A PAIN.
...AT THE TIME...
BUT...
...THAT WAS ALL IT WOULD TAKE TO PUSH HER TO COMMIT SUICIDE.
I DIDN'T KNOW...
I'M A TERRIBLE SON...!

...I ASKED GOD TO TELL MY MOM THAT I'M SORRY.
...BACK AT THE SHRINE...
THAT'S WHY...
I REGRET IT...
...IT'S OKAY.

I'M SURE YOUR MOM UNDERSTANDS.
WHAT'S ...
...DO I HAVE TO SAY THAT?
WHAT GROUNDS ...
...“OKAY” ABOUT IT?
THANK YOU, NAHO.
I'VE FELT GUILTY ABOUT IT ALL THIS TIME.
BUT IT'S LIKE A WEIGHT'S BEEN LIFTED.
SORRY...
CAN I BE ALONE FOR A LITTLE WHILE?
...

I COULDN'T DO ANYTHING FOR HIM.
SURE. I'LL BE RIGHT OVER THERE.
YEAH...

...TO "SAVE" SOME-BODY?
WHAT DOES IT MEAN...
I HAD NO IDEA...
...WHAT I SHOULD SAY.
AH!
NAHO!

AH... I GUESS IT DID LOOK LIKE THAT TO SOME PEOPLE...
DATE?!
DID YOU ENJOY YOUR DATE?
WHY DON'T YOU JUST GO OUT WITH HIM?
SORRY WE'RE LATE!
THAT'S OKAY. WHAT HAPPENED?
NOT IMPORTANT.
Giggle!
WHAT?!
YOU'RE BLUSHING!
THAT'S A GOOD SIGN!
HA HA HA
Suwa and Itagaki-kun are at Mickey D's...
...
SO WHERE'S KAKERU?
...HUH?
GZZZZ
GZZZZ
GZZZZ

ARE YOU OKAY?
I'M WORRIED ABOUT YOU, KAKERU.
IF YOU DON'T MIND THAT IT'S ME, I'D LIKE TO HELP YOU, SO FEEL FREE TO TELL ME ANYTHING.
KAKERU
8/4 20:39
I'M GOING HOME EARLY.
THANK YOU FOR THIS EVENING.
THANK YOU.
...WHAT SHOULD I DO?
BUT THEN...
BUT...
8/11 8:15
DAYS HAVE PASSED AND I STILL HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO DO ANYTHING.
...I CAN SAY, "I'VE SAVED KAKERU."
THERE'S NO WAY...
SOB
ぐすっ

UUHN...
CAN I DO IT?
IF I CAN'T... IF I CAN'T SAVE HIM...
I'M SURE IT'LL BE NO EASY FEAT.
ドンドン
DONG DONG
NAHO!
SUWA-KUN'S HERE.
SORRY FOR JUST SHOWIN' UP.
I'M ON MY WAY TO THE SOCCER CLUB.
KAKERU HASN'T BEEN SHOWIN' UP MUCH LATELY, SO I THOUGHT MAYBE YOU KNEW SOMETHING ABOUT IT.
NAHO, WHAT'S WRONG?
...
KAKERU...

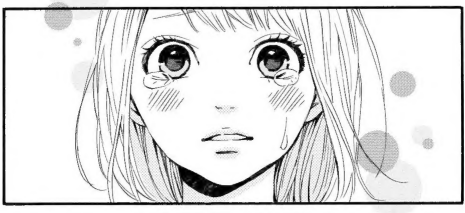
HE KNOWS KAKERU WELL.
MAYBE ONE PERSON CAN'T DO IT ALONE.
MAYBE...
...I'LL TELL SUWA ABOUT IT.
...ABOUT THE LETTER, TOO.
I THINK I'LL TELL HIM...
ALTHOUGH I DON'T KNOW IF HE'LL BELIEVE ME...
UM...
I WANT TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT KAKERU.
SURE...
I WANT YOU TO HELP ME SAVE HIM.

HE MIGHT NOT HELP.
...HE MAY NOT BELIEVE ME.
EVEN IF I DO TELL HIM...

NAHO.
UM...
BUT I WANT HIM TO HELP...

DON'T WORRY.
IT'LL BE OKAY.

DID YOU GET...
...A LETTER?



...YEAH.
I GOT ONE...
...FROM MYSELF
TO BE CONTINUED...